



THE NEW COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY

By Alexander Barmine

RECENTLY the American press has talked less and less about the Communist danger. Yet that danger has never been greater than it is today. As one who worked 20 years under the Communist dictatorship in close association with the Soviet leaders, I feel it is my duty to warn the American people against this insidiously growing menace to their free institutions.

The present situation is a curious paradox. The United States is waging a deadly struggle against Nazi totalitarianism. All its energies, labor, wealth, thousands of its lives, are being sacrificed to destroy this enemy of democracy. Yet, at the same time, in the press, on the radio, in the Government and among liberal circles supposed to represent the vigilant conscience of the nation, there is in process a moral and psychological disarmament before another totalitarian conspiracy — that of the Communists — which threatens our democracy even more seriously.

It is dismaying to see how our Left intelligentsia, swayed by subtle Communist propaganda, have transformed the triumph of superhuman fighting will of the Russian people into a triumph of the totalitarian Communist regime. The Russians had no choice but to fight under whatever regime they had, and they rightly decided that foreign tyranny would be

worse than native. But what shall we say of American "democrats" who, instead of praising the Russian people and hoping they may reap the reward of freedom, praise the regime that oppresses them and compare it favorably with our democratic way of life?

The unspeakable tragedy of the Russian people is that they are compelled to fight the foreign aggressor without any rights or liberties of their own. Every second family of these Russian fighting men has lost someone in a purge, or to one of the concentration camps in which at least ten million victims of the dictatorship are still enduring a living death.*

Happy Accident

UNDER COVER of this undiscriminating praise of "Russia," the totalitarian Communist habit of thought is penetrating insidiously into the body of American democracy. The credit which was passed from the Russian people to the totalitarian regime is being further handed along to the American Communists — those rabid isolationists during the Stalin-Hitler pact and "patriots" only since Hitler attacked Russia. But for the happy accident that Hitler made his attack

* Victor A. Kravchenko, Soviet official who recently resigned in Washington, places the number at 15,000,000. ("I Broke with Stalin's Russia," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, July, '44.)

on Russia *before* instead of *after* Pearl Harbor, these Communists would now be in jail with the Nazis. But that does not prevent them from playing, with the help of high-up New Dealers, a more and more important role in American politics. Few even of their enemies realize how important that role is.

The "dissolution" of the Communist Party, which set so many naïve minds at rest, marked the beginning of a Communist conspiracy in the United States, which is vastly more dangerous than the original party ever was to our institutions. To anyone familiar with Communism, this maneuver was not a new one. From its foundation by Lenin in 1903, the Russian Bolshevik movement always had two organizations, one "legal" and one "underground." The function of the legal party was to set the stage for a seizure of power by the controlling underground group. To "liquidate" the legal party altogether in certain situations was a recognized, frequently discussed maneuver. The American Communists have now executed that maneuver. Unless you understand this, you will never find your way in the present maze of Left-Wing politics.

Four events recently followed one another in quick succession:

1. The transformation of the Communist Party of America into an "educational" association;

2. The winning by the Communist Left Wing of control of the American Labor Party;

3. The emergence of the Political Action Committee of the CIO as a major force in Democratic Party politics; and

4. The "dismantling" of certain special departments investigating Communist activity in our Army and Navy Intelligence, and the attempt to destroy their files.

Few understood the connection between these events. Yet they marked the beginning of a grandiose plan for the penetration and eventual conquest of American social, political and governmental institutions — a new Communist conspiracy.

New Disguise

FOR many years the American Communist Party functioned, with a frank program of overthrow by violence, as an open revolutionary party. The result was complete failure. The American people repudiated this overt attack on democracy, and the party remained a small isolated group. In all these years it never elected one Representative or Senator, and at Presidential elections never polled much more than 200,000 votes. The sole pro-Communist elected, Representative Marcantonio, of New York, campaigned as a representative of democratic organizations. But Marcantonio's success was significant, and it taught the Communists a lesson. They began to tone down their extreme program, and to penetrate our established political institutions in disguise.

It was not, however, until the Soviet Union was attacked by Hitler, and needed vastly increased help from American capitalism, that the Communists started going through the motions of suicide. This began in February 1943 when the Party published in full-page ads in 16 newspapers throughout the country a speech of its General Secretary, Earl Browder, entitled "Hitler's Secret

Weapon — the Bogey of Communism.” Browder laughed at democratic Americans for taking seriously the Communist threat. “American democracy,” he said, “must grow up and stop believing in ghosts and witches.”

Probably nothing like that had ever happened before — a political party spending \$56,000 (the estimated cost) to hold its own program up to ridicule as a bogey.

But stranger things were to come.

On May 22 the dissolution of the Communist International was announced in Moscow, and Browder promptly wrote a letter to the press offering “to responsible groups and leaders in American public life” the assistance of the Communist Party in “a coöperative effort to lay the specter of Communism.” And in January 1944, at an immense mass meeting in New York’s Madison Square Garden, Browder “recommended” that the Communist Party go out of business! It was to be replaced by a “Communist political association.” But this association would “oppose all strikes” and champion capitalism, the “big bourgeoisie,” the program of the National Association of Manufacturers — everything to which Communism is diametrically opposed.

The nation’s bewilderment at this volte-face was typified by a New York newspaper, which called it “the most amazing episode in the history of American Communism,” and asked: “What is left of Communism?”

What is left of Communism is exactly what existed at the beginning — an astute and unscrupulous conspiracy to lay the groundwork for eventually seizing political power in the United States and transforming this country into a totalitarian Communist dictatorship. The reason Americans are bewildered is that they cannot understand totalitarian methods. They imagine that a group aiming to

transform America from capitalist to Communist must necessarily *advocate* Communism. But totalitarian conspirators do not care what they advocate. All they want is to get their accomplices into key positions. All they care about is power. Ideas, faiths, programs, parties, political associations — to them, all these things that Americans take so seriously are merely tricks and implements for the seizure of power.

The Grab for Political Power

THIS WAS made clear in the second of those four events previously mentioned. With the help of Sidney Hillman, a small thinly camouflaged Communist minority took over the American Labor Party, representing half a million votes in New York State. This might easily put into their hands (and at the disposal of Moscow) the balance of power, and likely the fate of a national election, in that state.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the significance of this event. To Communists it was a revelation of the sure way to power in the United States, a triumphant vindication of their new non-Party policy. If a small group of Communists, camouflaged as Left trade-unionists, could capture the whole Labor Party, why could not other groups, donning an even more conservative disguise, capture key positions in the Democratic or Republican Party? Experience with the Labor Party showed that they could find politicians ready to play the game, provided the real purpose was not mentioned.

Thus the next step in the Communist conspiracy was the attempt, through the Political Action Committee * of the CIO, to gain a dominating power in the Democratic Party. Here, as in the capture of the Labor Party, their accommodating ally is Sidney Hillman. He has placed

no Communists in formal leadership of the PAC, but he has granted to Communists the key positions they require in order to back the PAC as one of their own organizations.

“Every worker must take action to broaden the influence of the PAC. . . . To know what to do and how to do it, you need the *Daily Worker*.” So reads a circular letter sent out by the official organ of the Communist Political Association.

In its lower branches the PAC holds joint meetings with Communist organizations, and that much of its work is done by Communist zealots is well known to all. John L. Lewis, who has been through this game of trying to “use” the Communists for other purposes than their own, summed the thing up when he declared on February 29, 1944:

“Philip Murray is the prisoner of the Communists in his own union. They control him and the CIO through their seats on his executive council, and there isn’t a blessed thing he can do about it. Sidney Hillman is just as badly off. Both of them have got to play ball with the Communists now or die.”

Less than four years ago Hillman himself warned the CIO against the very maneuver he is now engineering. At its Third Constitutional Convention, November 20, 1940, he pleaded — “with tears streaming down his face,” to quote a New York reporter — against an attempt to coöperate with Communists who “cannot participate in the democratic processes.”

“I must say to you that we must warn our young membership not to be misled by the fine speeches they will make, their professions of loyalty. . . . Their loyalty is to someone else. They will take orders. . . . I say to you that these

people are a menace to the labor movement.”

Now Hillman is hand-in-glove with these same Communists. He thinks he is using them; but they know they are using him. There is just one way for democrats to beat totalitarians, and that is to refuse all coöperation and all political deals with them. Lewis learned this by bitter experience. Hillman knew it in 1940. What psychological change has come over Hillman in the meantime, I do not know; but politically only one big thing has happened. The Communists have liquidated their legal party, camouflaged themselves as democrats and procapitalist patriots of Americanism, and are conspiring in this new and more subtly unscrupulous manner to destroy our democratic institutions.

What Is the Communist Program?

THE READER may find it hard to believe that the Communist Political Association really hopes, within a reasonable future, to seize the state power in America. But he must remember that, besides their “maximum” revolutionary program — total abolition of democracy and private enterprise — the Communists have a “program minimum” that must precede the “maximum” program — *weaken democratic capitalist America to such an extent that she will be no serious rival to totalitarian Communist Russia.*

The simplest way to achieve this objective is to create disunity inside the United States — to provoke racial and social conflicts, epidemics of hatred, suspicion, intolerance and political demoralization, until the situation borders on civil war. In short, to transform the United States into a country similar to France in the epoch of the Popular Front of 1939 and 1940.

This is the service that the American Communists, with help from liberal and New Deal groups and some members of the Administration, are now performing as their "program minimum." The present glorification of Russian totalitarianism serves this purpose directly. Every encroachment by the New Deal upon individual liberties, if not clearly required by the war effort, serves this purpose. The growth of bureaucracy, of an excessive apparatus of regimentation, serves it. Stirring up racial issues, inflating the facts of persecution, hysterical witch-hunting by the *Daily Worker* type of newspaper and by certain types of columnists — all serve this purpose. The perpetuation of one Administration for 16 years also serves it. The present Administration, moreover, because of its apparent blindness to the conspiratorial and totalitarian nature of Communism, consciously or unconsciously protects in numberless ways the success of the conspiracy. That is why, by orders from Moscow, the Communists are all out for the Fourth Term.

The Drive on the Navy Desk

BUT while Communists have taken over the Labor Party, and are penetrating the trade unions, worming into Government agencies in growing numbers, and hoping to get control of the Democratic Party, there are two Government institutions in which previously they have been unable to achieve any success at all. Those are the Army and the Navy. The Communists have failed here, first because high Army and Navy officers took an uncompromising attitude toward them, and second, because both possessed in their Intelligence services an extremely efficient apparatus for detecting, unmasking and blocking the Communist maneuvers — especially their efforts to penetrate into the

officer corps.

To the Communists this was a disastrous defeat, for at the moment when their plot for the seizure of key posts and departments in the Government should approach completion, the attitude of the Army and Navy might frustrate the whole thing. Moreover, the exhaustive files on Communists kept by the Army and Navy Intelligence, besides barring them from responsible military posts, help to unmask those who are trying to win key positions in civil government.

That is why tremendous pressure was exerted to bring about, against strong opposition in responsible Army and Navy circles, a dismantling of those branches of the Army and Navy Intelligence which dealt with the activities of Communists and Communist-fronters, and a destruction of their files.

In the Third Naval District which includes New York City, headquarters of the American Communists, the Navy had built up an intelligently informed "Communist desk" which since Pearl Harbor had accumulated extensive files on subversive individuals and organizations. So authoritative had this intelligence unit become that its weekly reports of "trends" in the American Communist movement went regularly to the FBI, Army Intelligence and the highest Navy officers in Washington. The unit itself came to be recognized as one of the best in the country.

Several months ago, after the equivalent "desk" in the Washington Office of Navy Intelligence was partially dismantled, the New York "desk" was virtually abolished and its trained experts sent to remote and unrelated assignments elsewhere.

The embarrassment of Army and Navy officials when approached about such developments, and their half-denials, show that there has been

a serious conflict, and that pressure has been strong. A U. S. Senator has asserted that an attempt was made to destroy the Army files on Communist activities, and that only prompt Senate action forestalled the attempt and preserved these vital files.

The fact that a few months earlier there had been a softening up of the policy of the Civil Service Commission in questioning applicants as to their affiliation with Communist-front organizations shows that these moves have had backing in high circles. The influence of eminent Government officials, whether conscious or not, must have been used.

Such is the meaning of the four recent events mentioned. They reveal a flourishing conspiracy, helped by influential but foolish people, to undermine American democracy and the American State as a barrier against world totalitarianism. This conspiracy must be exposed.



ALEXANDER BARMINE was born in Russia 44 years ago. After serving at the front with the Red Army, he entered the General Staff College and graduated in 1923 with the rank of brigadier general. Sent abroad by the Foreign Trade Office, he studied political life in Europe, Asia and Africa, saw democracies in work and in struggle, how they fell and how dictatorships rose in their place. From 1929 to 1931 he held the post of director general of the Soviet Trade Delegations in France and in Italy. In 1932, he became first vice-president of the Central Trust "Stanko-Import" (Machine-Tool Import), an organization conducting the retooling of all the defense plants in the U.S.S.R. For the next two years he was the president of the central trust handling the exports of all products of the automobile, aviation and armament industries of the Soviet Union — the "Auto-Moto-Export." In December 1935 he was appointed to the Soviet Legation in Greece.

During his years of work abroad, Barmine became gradually disillusioned with

the Bolshevik dictatorship, and in 1937, while chargé d'affaires in Athens, he resigned and broke with the Soviet regime. He was granted asylum in Paris as a political refugee. He started his career in the United States in 1940 as a worker in a metal factory. In 1942 he entered the United States Army as a private. Subsequently, in what he considers the happiest moment of his life, he became an American citizen.

Since 1937, Alexander Barmine has published numerous magazine and newspaper articles, and a book, *Memoirs of a Soviet Diplomat*, which attracted international attention. Another book, *One Who Survived*, is ready for publication.

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